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China Institute In America

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THE CHINA INSTITUTE IN AMERICA

By Eugene Shen, Ph.D.,

Secretary to China Institute in America.

IT is a generally recognized fact that the history of Chinese-American relationship has been marked by a sustained feeling of friendliness. Such mutual good feeling, however, should be supported by a broader understanding of each other's culture and institutions. This need is at least partly met by the creation of the China Institute in America.

The China Institute came into existence in May, 1926, as the result of a resolution adopted by the Trustees of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture. This Foundation was created in 1924 to administer the funds from the second remission of the American portion of the Boxer Indemnity. Aside from grants to various universities and other educational organizations, the China Institute, like the Metropolitan Library and the Department of Social Research, is an enterprise which the Foundation has directly undertaken. The general aim of the Institute is to promote a closer educational and cultural relationship between China and the United States. As conceived by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, there are four lines of activities which the Institute should undertake:

1. The dissemination of information concerning Chinese and American education.
2. The promotion of a closer relationship between Chinese and American educational institutions through the exchange of professors and students.
3. Assisting Chinese students in America in their educational pursuits, and also helping American students interested in the study of things Chinese.
4. The stimulation of general interest in America in the study of Chinese culture.

The Board of Trustees elected as the Director of the Institute Dr. P. W. Kuo, who has been deeply interested in the promotion of friendly relations between China and America. During the two and a half years of its existence, the Institute has been quite fortunate in securing the cooperation of various Chinese and American organizations as well as individuals in its efforts to realize the aims for which it was established. Its activities are best summarized according to the four divisions as already outlined.

(1) In the first place, the Institute has acted as a clearing house for inquiries concerning Chinese and American education. As far as possible, such inquiries are answered by giving printed material and furnishing references to other sources. An outstanding event which may be mentioned under this topic is the organization in 1926 of the Chinese educational exhibits in the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The exhibits were administered by the Institute upon the request of the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education which was responsible for the collection and sending of the material. The exhibits attempted to convey to the American public the idea of the continuity of Chinese culture, of the rapid progress in modern education, and of the evolution of a new Chinese civilization as a result of contacts with the West. It received considerable attention from visitors and called forth not a few favorable comments. The International Jury awarded a Grand Prize to China "for the development of a comprehensive system of public education," and the Institute received a Medal of Honor for "its unique and original presentation of the Chinese Educational Exhibits." Diplomas were also awarded to the thirty-five educational institutions and organizations which collaborated in furnishing the material for the exhibits.

(2) For the past several years educational work in China has been carried on under such adverse conditions that the establishing of exchange professorships with American universities is obviously impracticable. Nevertheless, the China Foundation was able to secure Professor J. G. Needham of Cornell University to lecture and direct research in biology, and the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education invited Professor W. H. Kilpatrick of Teachers' College, Columbia University, to make a lecture tour on education. A number of other American educators who visited China were extended assistance by the Institute. Similar assistance was extended to a number of Chinese educators visiting America. During the present year, we have in America Mr. Y. C. James Yen, Director of the National Association for the Mass Education Movement, and Professor William Hung of Yenching University, who is with the School of Chinese Studies at Harvard University. Dr. Hu Shih has been offered the Haskell Lectureship from the University of Chicago for 1929. The Institute has also assisted several American universities in securing instructors in their departments of Chinese.

(3) In regard to Chinese students in America, the Institute has also tried to be of assistance in a number of ways. Considerable corres-

pondence has been carried on to facilitate the admission of Chinese students in American colleges and universities, to give introductions and testimonies, to assist advanced students to secure opportunities for practical experience, and to adjust difficulties which sometimes arose with the immigration authorities. The Institute also participated in the administration of a loan fund which was specially created for emergency aid to Chinese students. Assistance to American students interested in Chinese studies chiefly consisted in answering inquiries and furnishing references to original sources of information.

(4) The general public in America has been very much interested in the study of China's conditions, especially those relating to political and international affairs. The Institute received a large number of requests for speakers on these topics. Such requests were as far as possible complied with, either by members of the Institute staff or by others recommended for their special qualifications. Dr. Kuo has, since the establishment of the Institute, addressed many audiences in different parts of the country. Such efforts cannot but create a clearer and more sympathetic understanding of China by the American people and the results must be very far-reaching. Further American interest in the study of Chinese culture is shown by the recent establishment of the Harvard-Yenching Institute of Chinese Studies, made possible by the action of the trustees of the estate of the late Charles M. Hall. A number of Americans and Chinese have expressed their desire to create some organization on the Pacific Coast to cooperate with the Institute, and students in the University of California interested in China are organizing a club for the study of Chinese culture. The Institute has recently undertaken to make a survey of the American colleges and universities in regard to courses of instruction which relate to China's cultural background as well as China's present conditions.

Besides the activities outlined above under the four divisions, there are items in the program of the Institute which do not relate to any one of the four lines in particular. At irregular intervals, the Institute published a number of bulletins. One of these, Bulletin 4, is a list of "Theses and Dissertations by Chinese Students in America," which includes five hundred and sixty-eight titles. About one hundred and fifty additional titles have since been collected, including both old ones which came in too late to be printed in the list and new ones which are completed since its publication. Another, Bulletin 5, is a list of "One Hundred Selected Books on China," collected and annotated for reference for the general public. Demands for this list have been so many that a revised edition will have to be issued in the near future.

In attempting to realize its aims and to carry out its activities, the Institute endeavors to cooperate with organizations having similar interests and purposes. It has received assistance and cooperation from such organizations as the Institute of International Education, the International Institute, the China Society of America, the American Friends of China Society, The Institute of Pacific Relations, and the World Federation of Education Associations. A plan is now being contemplated for a closer cooperation with the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Institute, of course, is also cooperating with organizations in China, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Education, the National Committee of Chinese Y. M. C. A.'s, and the World's Chinese Students Federation. In the Second Biennial Meeting of the World Federation of Education Associations held in Toronto, August 7th-12th, 1927, the Institute cooperated with the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education in organizing a delegation to represent China at the various groups in the meeting.

In various other ways, the Institute has attempted to be generally useful in promoting a better relationship between China and the United States. On several occasions the Institute has lodged protest against certain motion picture films which present wrong ideas of China to the American public, resulting in revisions of the films. It has also acted as a representative for the China Foundation, and assisted in disseminating information and making investigation in the United States. It made a survey of the situation preliminary to the creation of science fellowships by the China Foundation.

The Institute has so far remained a direct enterprise of the China Foundation. At the last meeting of the Trustees of the Foundation in June, Dr. Kuo submitted a proposal whereby the Institute might in time become self-supporting and render a greater service. A membership would be created, and a board of directors with a secretariat would be established. The Trustees of the China Foundation have already accepted the recommendation and have authorized Dr. Kuo to work out the details with the Director of the Foundation.

If this plan will materialize and if sufficient funds can be raised, larger quarters or a special building will be secured and the program of the Institute can be broadened and more vigorously carried out. The projected plan is to include the following items of activities:

I. To promote:
   1. The exchange of professors between Chinese and American educational institutions.

2. The creation of fellowships and scholarships for Chinese to study in American colleges and universities.
3. The creation of fellowships and scholarships for Americans to study in China.
4. The study of Chinese culture in American educational institutions.
5. Lectures on Chinese subjects.
6. Conferences on problems relating to Chinese-American relationship.
7. Exhibits of Chinese art, education, and other phases of Chinese civilization.
8. Better publications, plays, pictures, etc., relating to China.

II. To maintain:

1. A reference library and research department.
2. An information service.
3. A lecture bureau.
4. A travel service.
5. An appointment agency to serve Chinese organizations seeking proper American trained men.
6. A student section to promote the intellectual and social welfare of the Chinese students in America.
7. A section to promote the welfare of Chinese residents in America.
8. An American section to keep in touch with Americans who either have been to China or are otherwise interested in China, and to seek their cooperation.

III. To publish:

1. Monographs on special subjects relating to China and Chinese culture.
2. A periodical devoted to shorter articles, discussions, and items of current interest relating to China and Chinese culture.

A program like this of course cannot be carried out all in one day. But, judging from the interest shown by so many people in the present Institute, it will undoubtedly receive the most hearty support in various quarters. Dr. Kuo has consulted many prominent people both in this country and in China in regard to this proposed program, and has received much encouragement.

It is also within the scope of the plan to establish an American Insti-

tute in China to reciprocate the work of the China Institute in America. American friends of China like Dr. Paul Monroe, Dr. Edward H. Hume, and others, are very much interested in the creation of such an institute, which will certainly also receive support from people in China. The two institutes can then intimately cooperate with each other in their common task of promoting a better understanding between the two peoples on both sides of the Pacific.